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Community Relations Plan

for

Houston Lead

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April 1999

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FEBRUARY 1999

Houston Lead State Superfund Site Houston, Texas

Community Relations Plan for Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study

Updated: February 1999

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
for
REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION
and
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Houston Lead State Superfund Site
Houston, Harris County, Texas

February 1999

Office of Waste Management
Remediation Division
Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
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Austin, Texas 78753
Telephone -- 1-800-633-9363
(Within Texas calls only)

**COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN
for
REMEDIAL INVESTIGATION
AND
FEASIBILITY STUDY**

Houston Lead State Superfund Site
300 Holmes Road
Houston, Harris County, Texas

February 1999

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Overview of Community Relations Plan

This community relations plan (CRP) identifies issues of community concern regarding the Houston Lead state Superfund site, in Houston, Harris County, Texas. It also outlines the anticipated community relations activities to be conducted during each phase of the cleanup at the Houston Lead site.

The Houston Lead community relations plan has been prepared to aid the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission (TNRCC) in developing a community relations program tailored to the needs of the community affected by the Houston Lead site. The TNRCC will conduct community relations activities to ensure that the local public has input to decisions and access to information about Superfund activities at the Houston Lead site.

The information in this plan is based primarily on the Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) 3012 Preliminary Assessment, the Hazard Ranking System (HRS) package, and the Pre-Statement of Work for the Houston Lead site.

Site Profile

A. Site Location and Description:

The Houston Lead site formerly housed a secondary nonferrous metals smelter and lead-acid battery recycling operation. It is located in east Houston at 300 Holmes Road (Latitude 29° 39' 30"N/Longitude 95° 27' 27"W).. The site has been under an agreed judgement since January 1984 to properly close the site.

The site is in a non-residential area, southwest of the Holmes Road intersection with FM 521 and northeast of the Holmes Road intersection with South Old Post Oak Road.

Houston Lead constructed a series of dikes and pits along the north and west boundaries to handle potential run-on and run-off problems. A 1988 Texas Water Commission report indicated severe soil contamination with some soils containing 40%-50% lead.

MEDIA AFFECTED:
Soil, Groundwater

CONTAMINANTS:
Lead, Cadmium, Arsenic

B. Background and Operating History:

In 1951, the Gulf Lead Company (GLC) constructed a secondary lead smelting facility at the Houston Lead site to recycle/reclaim lead from lead acid batteries. Gulf Lead workers manually cut each battery with an ax and then carried the lead plates to a small on-site smelter. Lead obtained from the batteries was smelted to produce ingots for sale to industrial facilities. Gulf Lead only operated the facility for about a year.

In 1952, Houston Lead Company purchased the site and continued to operate the smelting furnace for recycling/reclaiming used lead and refining of non-ferrous metals.

The secondary lead smelter was replaced in the late 1960s or 1970s with a newer smelter furnace after a hurricane remnant storm destroyed the original furnace. In the new system, electrolyte fluids from the crushed batteries drained into a trench system around the battery breaking work area.

The acidic fluids were diluted and neutralized in a freshwater collection system that was upgraded to allow acid from the batteries to drain to a concrete pit prior to off-site disposal.

Houston Lead remained in operation until August 1981.

In January 1984, Houston Lead accepted terms of an Agreed Final Judgement, spelling out how the site was to be managed pending final closure.

A comprehensive groundwater monitoring evaluation by the Texas Water Commission concluded in August 1987 that only a small number of the agreed judgement provisions had been initiated by Houston Lead.

Three months later, in November, the site was proposed to the first state Superfund registry and became one of the first 10 sites listed in the State of Texas.

Houston Lead challenged the Superfund listing of the site, calling the lead-contaminated soil a valuable reclaimable byproduct of the former smelting and battery reclamation operations, and citing negotiations to smelt the soil to recover lead and other valuable constituents.

In response to some of the challenges and opinions from the EPA that it was inappropriate to use data obtained during facility operations (prior to cessation of activity), the Texas Water Commission revised the hazard ranking system package score in April 1988, and

removed the air release data from the score. The revised score put the Houston Lead site at 25.7

In 1988, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency conducted an investigation of surface and subsurface soils to a depth of 10 feet below ground surface. Again, in 1994, EPA evaluated the site, sampled surface water, groundwater and ambient air, and evaluated migration pathways and potential environmental receptors.

In March 1994, following the repeat evaluation, EPA re-designated the site as NFRAP (No Further Remedial Action Planned) as far as federal Superfund action was concerned.

While the site remained on the state Superfund registry, it was accepted into the voluntary cleanup program on May 23, 1996 under Title 30 Section 333.5 of the Texas Administrative Code following repayment to the TNRCC of all Superfund administrative costs.

From May 1996 to April 1998, Houston Lead performed the equivalents of a remedial investigation, baseline risk assessment and feasibility study. The remedial investigation indicated that metals contamination (lead, cadmium and arsenic) existed at the site at concentrations which might threaten human health and the environment.

The baseline risk assessment concluded that further action was needed to eliminate an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health and the environment.

The feasibility study, utilizing the TNRCC's Presumptive Remedies Guidance Document for Soils at State Superfund Sites (RG-277, April 1997) indicated that containment with groundwater monitoring was the preferred remedy.

Approximately 15 interested citizens/PRP representatives attended a public meeting August 18, 1998 at the Morris Frank Library, 6440 West Bellfort to hear a report by Roy F. Weston vice president Susan Litherland on the justification for the remedy of containing the soils and covering the pile with an impermeable clay cap. No comments were received that would change the proposed remedy.

The site was proposed for deletion from the state Superfund registry on October 23, 1998, allowing the public 30 days to comment on the proposed deletion or to challenge the decision..

The deletion from the state Superfund registry became final on December 18, 1998. The Houston Lead site cleanup will continue to be monitored by the TNRCC Voluntary Cleanup Section.

Community Profile

The Houston Lead state Superfund site is located in southeast Houston at 300 Holmes Road, in a non-residential section of the city. However, residential growth has pushed development to within about 1,000 yards of the site.

There are no other (state or federal) Superfund sites within a five mile radius of the site

The City of Houston is governed by a mayor and a 14-member council. The city is divided into nine council districts, each represented by a specific council member. The five other members of the council are elected on an at-large basis. The Houston Lead site is within District D, the specific area served by Councilman Jew Don Boney, Jr.

At the county level, the site is in Harris County Precinct 1 served by Commissioner El Franco Lee.

At the state level, the Houston Lead site is in House District 132 served by State Representative Scott Hochberg. State Senator Rodney Ellis' District 13 covers the site and the surrounding area.

Community Involvement

There has been one community meeting regarding the Houston Lead site since the initial meeting regarding the site's proposed listing on the state Registry held in Pasadena on November 4, 1987.

Approximately 15 interested citizens/PRP representatives attended a public meeting August 18, 1998, at the Morris Frank Library, 6440 W. Bellfort to hear a report on the proposed remedy which is consolidation of any remaining contaminated soils and covering the pile with an impermeable cap. See copy of public notice from *Texas Register* and *Houston Chronicle*.

There have been two recorded inquiries by area residents or elected officials to the TNRCC regarding the Houston Lead site.

On October 23, 1998, a legal notice was published in the Texas Register announcing that the site was being deleted from the state registry of Superfund sites, and giving the public 30 days to file a challenge or objection to the deletion.

There were no challenges or objections received within the allowed period. The site is now being monitored by TNRCC under the Texas Voluntary Cleanup Program.

Specific Objectives of the Community Relations Program

Responsibilities of Community Relations Liaison:

- A. Maintain open communications between the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, Harris County, City of Houston, state and federal officials and concerned citizens.
- B. Continue to expand the mailing list to include additional agencies, organizations, and residents that are interested in the project.
- C. Provide a central information contact (see Appendix C) from whom interested parties can receive information on site activities, project status, and study results.
- D. Provide citizens, involved agencies, elected officials, and the media with accurate, timely information concerning the scope, progress, and findings of site-related activities by issuing press releases and conducting community meetings.
- E. By telephone, written correspondence and attending public meetings, interested parties can make inquiries to ensure communication.
- F. Brief field teams on community relations issues before performing on-site investigations.
- G. Provide all information, especially technical findings, in a language that is understandable to the general public and in a form useful to interested citizens and elected officials through the preparation of fact sheets and news releases, when major findings become available during project phases.
- H. Monitor community concerns and information requirements as the project progresses by monitoring the community response to news releases and community meetings.
- I. Modify the community relations plan as changes in community attitudes and needs occur and maintain accuracy during different project phases.

Community Relations Techniques

A. Project Status Briefings for State and Local officials- To periodically inform, State and Local officials of project developments over the course of the program during the investigations, findings and as project developments occur.

B. Project Status Briefings for community groups and concerned citizens (may include public meetings, if needed) - To periodically inform the general community of significant project developments and findings; to respond to inquiries accordingly and incorporate local concerns into the decision making process as appropriate.

C. Press releases/Press conferences - To periodically inform the general community of project status, i.e. significant changes or developments related to schedule, scope, and/or objectives.

D. Project Mailing List - To provide the means through which press releases, project status reports and other significant communications can be distributed to concerned groups and individuals.

E. Public Consultations - Conduct informal meetings (if needed) with residents. To provide an opportunity for affected residents to express any concerns and to make inquiries to insure effective two-way communication.

F. Program Document Repositories - To maintain easily accessible repositories through which the public may review project outputs. The public will be periodically informed of the availability of project documents and the location of repositories via techniques A thru D.

G. Revise CRP - To reflect changes in site activities or local concerns. After the Remedy Selection Document (RSD) has been issued, the CRP will be revised to address implementation of the selected remedial action alternative.

Elected Officials

State

The Honorable Rodney Ellis
State Senate District 13
District Office
440 Louisiana Ste 575
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/236-0306
FAX 713/236-0604

The Honorable Rodney Ellis
State Senate District 13
PO Box 12068
Austin TX 78711-2068
Phone 512/463-0113
FAX 512/463-0326

The Honorable Scott Hochberg
Texas House of Representatives
District Office
4660 Beechnut #245
Houston TX 77096
Phone 713/660-7783
FAX 713/663-6817

The Honorable Scott Hochberg
Texas House of Representatives
PO Box 2910
Austin TX 78768-2910
Phone 512/463-0492
FAX 512/463-5896

County

The Honorable Robert A. Eckels
Harris County Judge
Harris County Courthouse
1001 Preston
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/755-4000

The Honorable El Franco Lee
Harris County Commissioner, Pct 1
Harris County Courthouse
1001 Preston
Houston TX 77002
Phone 713/755-6111

City

The Honorable Bob Lanier, Mayor
City of Houston
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2200

The Honorable Jew Don Boney Jr
Council Member District D
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2001

On January 1, 1999 Lanier was replaced by:

The Honorable Lee P Brown, Mayor
City of Houston
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2200
FAX 713/247-2355

The Honorable Annise Parker
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2014

The Honorable Joe Roach
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2013

The Honorable Orlando Sanchez
Council Member at Large
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Phone 713/247-2005

The Honorable Chris Bell
Council Member at Large
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Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2006

The Honorable Carroll Robinson
Council Member at Large
PO Box 1562
Houston TX 77251
Phone 713/247-2012

Houston News Media

Houston Chronicle
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PO Box 4260
Houston TX 77210
Phone - 713/220-7171
FAX --- 713/220-6806

1415 N Loop West #400
Houston, TX 77057
Phone - 713/342-6601
FAX --- 713/407-1400

KHYS-FM
ATTN: News Director
24 Greenway Plaza #1508
Houston TX 77046
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FAX --- 713/623-8173

KLAT-AM/KLTN-FM
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FAX --- 713/407-1400

KMJQ-FM
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24 Greenway Plaza #1508
Houston, TX 77046
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FAX --- 713/623-0106

KMPQ-AM/FM
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KPRC-AM

ATTN: News Director
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FAX --- 713/493-2885

KTRH-AM

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KHOU-TV

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KPRC-TV

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KRIV-TV

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KTMD-TV

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KTRK-TV
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KXLN-TV
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1-512/239-2253

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1-512/239-0666

Program Document Repositories

Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission
Central Records
12100 Park 35 Circle
Building D North Entrance
Austin, TX 78753
Phone 1-800/633-9363 (Ask for Ext 2920)
(Toll free for Texas calls only)
512/239-2920
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday

Meyer Branch Library
5005 W Belfort
Houston, Texas 77035
Phone 713/723-1630
Noon - 9:00 p.m. Monday and Thursday
10:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. Tuesday
10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. Wednesday, Friday and Saturday

